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**Sent:** Monday, December 21, 2020 6:25 PM  
**To:** Tavlarides, Mark <mtavlarides@bgrdc.com>  
**Subject:** Bahrain Update

Good afternoon,

I wanted to share the attached PDF of the position of the Embassy of Bahrain in the United States on Iran's acts of destabilization against the Kingdom of Bahrain. The document discusses Iran's "sectarian foreign policy – sponsoring terrorism, spreading hateful rhetoric, and funding civil wars across the world" and notes that Bahrain is a "special target of the Iranian ideology and is on the frontline of Iran's effort to impose a theocratic regime in the Middle East."

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,  
Mark

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## EMBASSY OF THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN WASHINGTON D.C.

### **THE POSITION OF THE EMBASSY OF BAHRAIN IN THE UNITED STATES ON IRAN'S ACTS OF DESTABILIZATION AGAINST THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN**

#### **Introduction**

For the past forty years, the Islamic Republic of Iran has operated a sectarian foreign policy – sponsoring terrorism, spreading hateful rhetoric, and funding civil wars across the world. Iran has refused to sign many universally accepted antiterrorism agreements, made excessive territorial claims, been deficient in its compliance with anti-money laundering laws, and rejected all restrictive measures imposed against it as an unlawful intervention in its foreign affairs.

Prior to the Iranian Revolution, the Kingdom of Bahrain and Iran had formalized diplomatic relations with the unanimous adoption of UNSCR 278 in 1970. On May 14, 1970, Iran's Majlis ratified the resolution, and Iran's Senate did the same four days later on May 18, 1970. This unprecedented acknowledgment of Bahrain's sovereignty opened the door to peaceful diplomatic relations between the two countries. This period of grace did not last long, as Sadeq Rouhani, a chief architect of the Iranian Revolution, declared nine years later at a press conference in Qom that Bahrain was an integral part of Iran and called for its annexation.

The conclusion of the Iranian Revolution ushered in an era that saw Iran export violence and terror throughout the Gulf region and the international community. Upon seizing power in 1979, Iran's Revolutionary Council repudiated the state's most important treaties and alliances, terminated its critical diplomatic missions, and turned its back on peace and stability. The Iranian regime has been implicated in assassinations, terrorist plots, and terrorist attacks in more than 40 countries since the revolution.

The Kingdom of Bahrain is a special target of the Iranian ideology and is on the frontline of Iran's effort to impose a theocratic regime in the Middle East. Under the Revolutionary Government, Iran has aggressively attempted to subvert Bahrain's sovereignty, employing different strategies of intervention and utilizing multi-dimensional tactics to implement its agenda. The bilateral relations between Bahrain and Iran have been strained since the Iranian Revolution due to Iran's interference in Bahrain's affairs, Iran's hegemonic initiatives to annex Bahrain, and Iran's continuous claim of sovereignty over Bahrain.





سفارة مملكة البحرين في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية / واشنطن  
EMBASSY OF THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN  
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Today Iranian political, military, and religious leaders continue to threaten the sovereignty of states in the Gulf region. They display intolerance for international norms and expectations, and they constantly seek out ways to expand their power, regardless of the means. Iran is a threat to global

stability, and Iran sees the Kingdom of Bahrain as a stepping-stone to expanding its influence throughout the Gulf and world. Iran's interference in the Kingdom of Bahrain's internal affairs is a microcosm of the challenges and predicaments Iran's unconventional foreign policy poses to the entire world.

#### **Iranian Response to International Pressure Campaigns & Agreements**

The signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was welcomed by the Kingdom of Bahrain and other leaders across the globe for its widespread initiative of peace and security. Although some might argue that the agreement firmly addressed the Iranian threat, the reality on the ground in the Gulf was very different. After the signing of this agreement, Iran's terror activities in the region did not stop. Employed through means of cyberterrorism, militant proxy groups, terrorist organizations, illicit finance, and violent rhetoric, Iran continued to threaten regional stability. Even with newly employed, advanced counterterrorism practices, Bahrain was victim to numerous attacks linked to Iran between 2015 and 2017.

Although Iranian statistics are not fully reliable, estimates suggest that Iran spends 3.4% of its total military budget on its conventional defense force while 65% goes to the IRGC to "safeguard the revolution". Immediately following the signing of the JCPOA, Iran's defense spending dramatically increased to more than 30 percent and the IRGC's budget reportedly increased by 50%. This increase in funding allowed Iran to funnel money directly into its destabilization campaigns in the Gulf.

The maximum pressure campaign deployed after the JCPOA has seen regional success in countering Iran's malign activities and threats. The Kingdom of Bahrain has not had any major terror attacks by Iranian-backed militia or terrorist groups since the withdrawal from the agreement, and funding to the IRGC has decreased, reducing its ability to train and activate local proxy groups in the region.





## EMBASSY OF THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN WASHINGTON D.C.

### **Comprehensive Agreement**

In light of the potential for an agreement with Iran in the future, the following areas are encouraged to me acclaimed for. It is believed that these areas will greatly reduce the Iranian threat both in the region and globally.

- (1) Gulf States, including Israel, ought to be included in the negotiations and writing of the official agreement. These states are directly threatened by the Iranian regime, and their cooperation is crucial to countering the Iranian threat.
- (2) While a major component of the original agreement was the restrictions applied on enriched uranium- and plutonium-production, the expiration of these restrictions after 10

and 15 years could permit Iran to expand its nuclear capacities in a reduced time. A temporary agreement allows Iran to accept short-term drawbacks for long-term rewards. Similar to other successful U.S. nuclear enrichment treaties, Iran should agree to forgo enrichment and reprocessing in exchange for U.S. nuclear know-how, materials, and equipment.

(3) Ballistic missile testing is another area of Iranian aggression that should be addressed in a future agreement. Iran was able to reallocate finances to programs that could be used to support any future nuclear ambitions with the original agreement. Ballistic missiles are a perfect platform for Iran to conduct nefarious acts in the region. If in the future Iran decides to build a nuclear weapon, ballistic missiles will allow them to deploy these missiles across the region.

(4) Restrictions on small arms manufacturing would directly counter a large part of the Iranian threat in the Gulf region. Small arms manufactured in Iran have been supplied to regional proxy and terrorist groups, and these arms have been found across the Middle East. The exportation of these weapons presents a threat to regional and international safety and security.

(5) Renouncing terrorism is crucial to any international agreement of peace. Iranian-sponsored proxy groups and terrorist organizations in the region have heavily destabilized the region. Specific mechanisms can be outlined and used to determine Iran's link to malign non-state actors and implement repercussions accordingly.

(6) Iran is a world leader in cyber-attacks, and although cyber-attacks are extremely hard to prevent, these attacks have the potential to disproportionately impact civilians through disruption to critical health, security, and economic infrastructure. Proper de-escalation channels can ensure cyber capabilities do not intensify.



EMBASSY OF THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN  
WASHINGTON D.C.

(7) Inspection mechanisms that are immediately available will ensure that Iran is complying with any agreement. Inspections that allow an extended period of time for preparation could be deemed inaccurate or suspicious.

(8) Clearly defined consequences for infractions can ensure the existence of a robust methodology to render Iran incapable of growing its malign activities and influence in other ways.

**Changing Iran's Behavior**

The Kingdom of Bahrain looks forward to the possibility of a partnership with the U.S. on a number of measures intended to counter Iran's malign influence and ensure that the Gulf region maintains its sovereignty and stability. The Kingdom of Bahrain remains committed to peaceful cooperation and negotiation as a means of ensuring peace in the region. Monetary support for Iran allows Iran to continue its malign activities and emboldens it to use other nations' funds to extend its terrorist networks and illicit efforts in the Gulf. While humanitarian aid is important, it must be addressed in a manner that does not allow Iran to abuse its power and allocations.

**Cooperation & Commitment**

The Kingdom of Bahrain believes that the Biden administration can succeed in changing Iran's behavior through comprehensive actions that involve the entire Gulf region. This will result in not only a more stable Middle East but a more stable world. The Kingdom of Bahrain remains steadfast in its commitment to collaborate with international partners in combatting terrorism in all forms. The Kingdom of Bahrain is also committed to displaying the facts surrounding Iran's aggressive terrorist actions to the international community to aid in counterterrorism efforts. The Kingdom of Bahrain supports all efforts to change Iran's behavior and to have a more secure and stable Middle East.